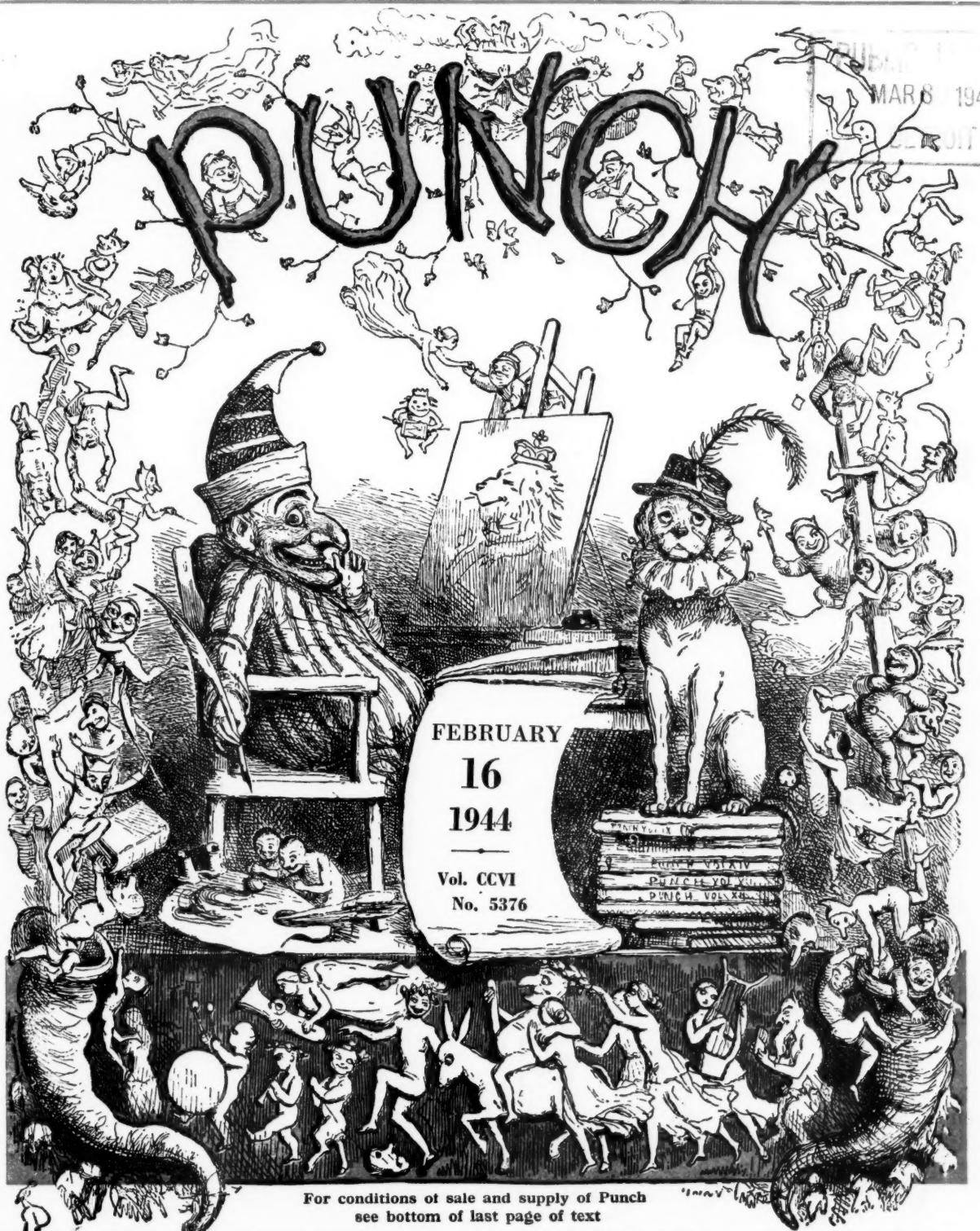


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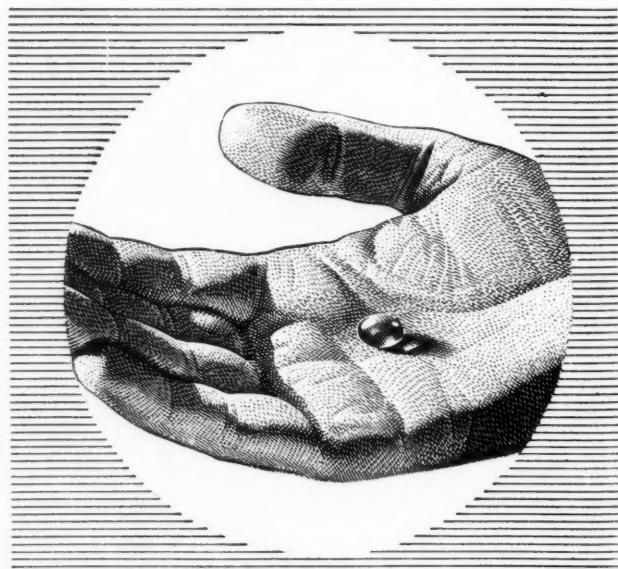
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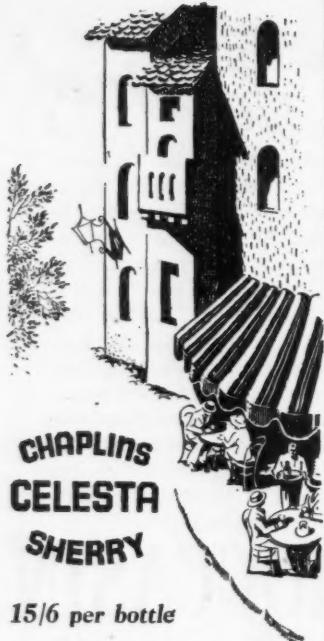
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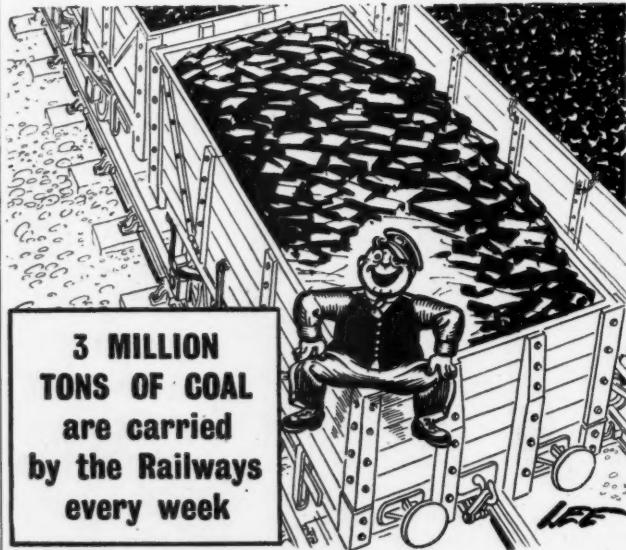
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HARRODS

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RAIL TRANSPORT
is "Half the Battle"



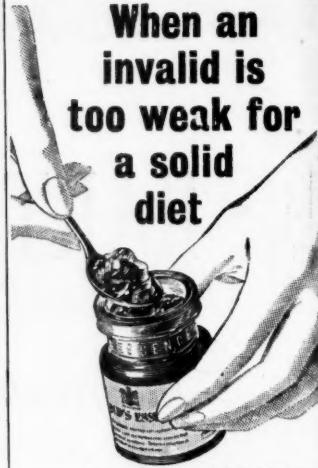
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THE PREPARATION which doctors recommend for invalids, in cases where the patient is so weak that only the smallest possible demand must be made on the digestive powers, is Brand's Essence.

Serve Brand's Essence straight from the jar, or with toast or biscuits. The limited supplies of Brand's Essence are being distributed on a strictly fair basis. Price 3/- a bottle.

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The popular British Cigar with the mild Havana flavour.

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25 for 27/6
(4 other sizes available)

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The World's most famous Collar



World-wide fame does not come undeserved. Van Heusen's popularity is due to comfort and style; they launder well and last longer.



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ANGOSTURA BITTERS

(259)

MATHER & PLATT, LTD., PARK WORKS, MANCHESTER 10

DON'T GO INTO THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY

Don't imagine that all you'll need is a moulding press and some moulding powder and you'll be ready for all the competition. The plastic moulding business is probably already overcrowded by peace-time standards and it's not the main way in which plastics will develop anyway.

You're probably in the plastics business already and don't know it. Don't you already have to bind things together? Don't you make something that could be stronger, lighter or more weather-proof? Are you in paint, timber, textiles, paper, or a hundred and one other trades?

The possibilities of Beetle Resins (Urea-Formaldehyde thermosetting plastics) used as a binder with other material are well-nigh unlimited—that way lies the greatest post-war use of plastics and there's probably a use for this type of plastic development right on your own doorstep.



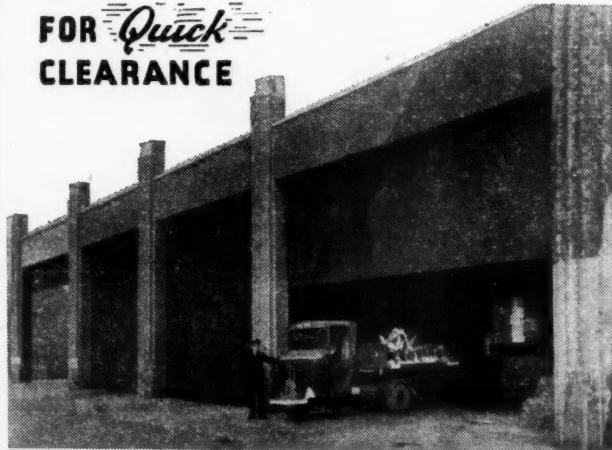
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The rapid clearance of loading bays, which is vital to efficiency in industry, is facilitated by the use of electrically operated steel shutters.

Electrical control, perfected by Mather & Platt, Ltd., saves valuable time by ensuring the quick opening and closing of shutters. Foolproof control eliminates all danger of misuse.

FOR Quick
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STORAGE AGAINST FUTURE NEED

ESSE ALSO DOES IT.

Work is light in an ESSE kitchen—no smoke, fumes, soot, grime, daily fire-lighting or continuous stoking. An ESSE burns marvellously little fuel yet is always ready for use.

ESSE Cookers are available for essential domestic requirements.

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Smith & Wellstood, Ltd. Estd. 1854

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Also at Liverpool,
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You are "in pocket" in more than one sense when you wear a "GOR-RAY" Skirt with the new "ZWOW" Pocket. The old, ugly placket has gone. In its place you have an unbroken hip line; and on the other side, an attractive, man-style pocket. There are no buttons or metal gadgets to cause hip bulge; and although the skirt fastens at the waistband, under-garments cannot possibly show through. Good drapers and stores everywhere stock "GOR-RAY" Skirts in a variety of attractive styles.

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All the better for the **ZWOW** Pocket

Issued by :
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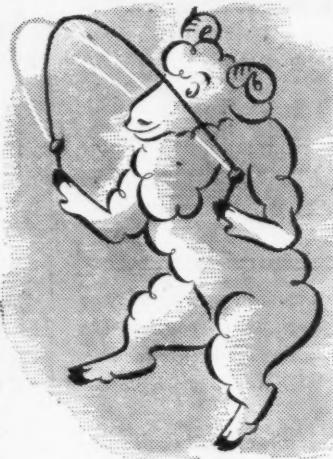
GLASTONBURY PREDICTIONS

Watch Aries

on

FEBRUARY 29th

When I saw, through my super-charged, rocket-boosted, astral telescope, the dignified Aries, Ram of the Zodiac, skipping, I knew something was definitely UP. Aries has never before been known to make a leap in the dark. I am therefore able to reveal that events will bound forward this leap-year towards the day when Morlands Glastonbury Motor Overshoes will again be obtainable in the shops.



MORLANDS GLASTONBURYS

★ Meanwhile, take care of those you have until post-war improved styles arrive.

The name "Meridian" on Men's underwear has ever been an assurance of the highest quality. Now, to that name, are added the words "UTILITY WEAR," because it must conform to austerity specifications and prices. Always the best value for money—it is now the best value for coupons too.

J. B. LEWIS & SONS LTD., Nottingham. Estd. 1815. Suppliers to the Wholesale Trade.

FROM AUSTINS TO AUSTIN OWNERS

A LITTLE AIR SAVES A LOT OF RUBBER

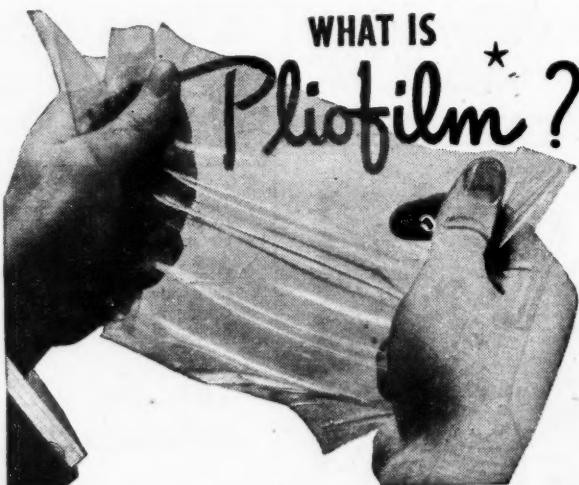


In any underinflated tyre, part of the load is being carried by the tyre casing instead of by the air inside. This causes overflexing and generates heat. Rupture of the fabric and rapid, uneven wear of the tread ensue. Don't spoil the value of your Austin's wartime job by letting it waste precious rubber. Always keep tyres at correct pressure.

HELP YOUR AUSTIN TO HELP THE COUNTRY

Read the Austin Magazine—4d monthly from your newsagent

THE AUSTIN MOTOR CO. LTD., LONGBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM



Just before the war, when Pliofilm was made available for commercial purposes, it became evident that Pliofilm was likely to revolutionise the whole field of packing materials. For Pliofilm proved to be waterproof, water moisture vapour-proof, dust-proof, acid-proof, germ-proof and oil-proof. Naturally, then, the impact of this amazing product upon industry and commerce was enormous. But war came—and at once the entire production of Pliofilm was turned

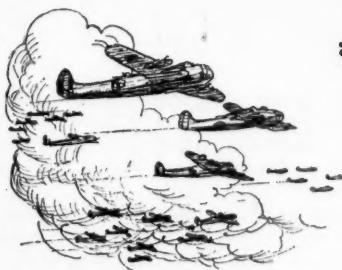
over to war industry. Today, even aircraft engines arrive here packed in Pliofilm. As a result of that ceaseless research and development which forever goes on in the Goodyear organisation, the vast array of problems which Pliofilm is solving today will remain to bestow themselves upon industry and commerce when peace comes round. ★PLIOFILM—a registered trade mark of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.).

Another

GOOD YEAR

contribution to progress

PUNCH



*Or
The London Charivari*

Vol. CCVI No. 5376

February 16 1944

Charivaria

SECRET meetings recently held by Bulgarian statesmen are expected to forestall the repercussions they might have had if nobody had known they were taking place.

○ ○

A German newspaper assures its readers that after reading a report by Goebbels, Hitler flew straight down to congratulate a number of bomber crews on their precision in destroying a certain target. Nobody had the heart to tell him they were only just about to set out for it.

○ ○

Love Me . . .

"She carried a bouquet of point setters."—*Wedding report in Hereford paper.*

○ ○

Readers of a women's journal have been debating whether men should learn housework. If the war goes on much longer *someone* will have to.

○ ○

Changes in the Nazi High Command which have been imminent for months will soon reach the stage of being expected to occur at some time.

○ ○

We understand that one of the questions raised at a recent miners' conference concerned the possibility of establishing a minimum striking-day week.

○ ○

General Franco is said to be considering how to react to the increasingly un-neutral behaviour of the Allies.



Some of Germany's more gullible statisticians are said to be deriving a certain amount of satisfaction from the fact that Goebbels has now shortened the Eastern front to such an extent that there isn't one.

○ ○

In view of war-time difficulties a shopper suggests that it would save endless trouble and complication if articles unobtainable in the big stores were all kept out of stock in the same department.

○ ○

An ex-heavyweight boxer has become a journalist. Now, presumably, he will write the articles written by heavyweight boxers.

○ ○

The trend of events on the Eastern Front seems to suggest that the Wehrmacht is successfully defending the whole world against Soviet aggression except the Wehrmacht.

○ ○

Eleemosynary, My Dear Watson

"SOCIETY FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF LADIES IN DEDUCED CIRCUMSTANCES."—*Advertisement.*

○ ○

Describing a recent fox-shoot a writer says that besides the reports of the shot-guns there was an occasional roar from an old-fashioned blunderbuss. Or it might have been an M.F.H. exploding with indignation.



Culture in Arms

I REMEMBER the scene quite well. It is wrong and silly at most times to drag up reminiscences of half-forgotten wars in this more terrible bother, but for once I cannot help it. The trenches handed over to us by our Allies, with an extraordinary *dossier* for defence and attack, had been frozen solid for many weeks, but though the weather was unpleasant, the annoyance of the thaw when it came was still more severe, for the duckboards where they existed sank deep in the mud, and what had been earth banks and sand-bags revealed portions of Germans now refrigerated but long, long dead.

It was in such surroundings, and over such understandings that a lance-corporal was heard to say "I'm halfashamed to confess it, Lancelot, but for my part I know nothing about the architecture of Rheims Cathedral, and I care even less."

Of course he was reprimanded and lost his stripe. He was a rustic lad, and came from an almost illiterate home. It was a happy chance that when we went back to rest-billets our transport officer was able to give the battalion a few resounding lectures on the glories of Gothic architecture. If the last sentence is not wholly true—if the remark made by the lance-corporal has been slightly changed and stripped of what we used to call, in studying Homer, "constant" epithets (and in all my experience the British soldier had only one epithet and, far oftener than was realized at home, only one noun) the point I am trying to make is the same.

British (and other) troops are well disciplined and are schooled to greater enthusiasm about their own regiment and their own battalion and even their own company than about the cause for which they are fighting. "The — got it yesterday. Poor —!" was a not infrequent saying. And it may be still. Nevertheless an officer is more comfortable if he believes that the men under his command have some general idea of the larger, more spiritual goals and targets of the war. And even now, when the B.B.C. has suspended variety entertainments in the Forces programme and substituted for them talks on Michael Angelo, on mediaeval painting and sculpture, and the influence of Greek art and letters on Rome, you still find both here and abroad privates who have scamped their lessons and listened with but half an ear to what they ought to know about the beginnings of Western civilization.

This is not a plea for barbarism. It is a plea for less cant. A peer has said (or so he is quoted) in the House of Lords: "Apart from sentimental grounds one could not be blind to the fact that whatever happened to the existing holder of the Holy See one could always get another. . . . I should, however, strongly deprecate the possibility of any action which might encourage the bombing of the city of Rome itself, and it would be a pity if every effort were not made to avoid it."

I agree with him. I suppose every properly educated person does. I should have gone further than he did. I should have said the same about Florence, Venice, Avignon, Chartres, and every place where the Germans can and will exploit our tenderness for anybody's past except (perhaps) our own and (possibly) theirs.

But we shall be no more than just if we admit that culture at least is not quite evenly distributed—not quite so evenly distributed as life and rations—amongst the British people at home and abroad. You, sophisticated and enlightened, humane and erudite reader, have a far greater portion of it than Lance-Corporal Jakes had at the time which I

have just recalled, larger perhaps than many full corporals even in the conscript armies of to-day.

Not every soldier has made the Grand Tour, nor even (more shame to him!) is accustomed to read the literary weekly papers, for whose views he is facing death. There is an oligarchical, more intellectualist tone in much of what I read about ancient monuments, and it ought to be more widely diffused if we are to hold up the seven lamps of art, science, democracy, freedom, architecture, toleration and scholarship all at once in a twilit and bewildered world.

A man in many overcoats who had driven me to this office in a taxi-cab said to me a week ago "What do you think about this 'ere bombing of Rome, guv'nor?" He said "guv'nor," I think, less because he attributed any superiority, social or moral or intellectual, to me as his late passenger than because I was still trying to work out the addition of sixpence to three-and-ninepence in the palm of my hand, and because I had only one thin overcoat and there was an easterly wind.

I said, as the speaker in the House of Lords had said, that I thought it would be a great pity if we had to do it. I added that I supposed it was really a military affair, and that there were a great many other famous and beautiful cities in Europe, though none so famous as Rome.

He said "Well, I've bin bombed out of me house three times, and I've got the two boys in Italy, and I don't care how many — cities we bombs. We're bombing Germany, aren't we?"

That's just it. He didn't care. And of course he ought to have cared. But who was I (in an east wind and a hurry and with so queer an assortment of copper and silver in my hand) to enlighten him?

I supposed that I was right in saying the whole question was really a military one. Or wasn't it? Political and military. And cultural. I gave him five shillings in lieu of an extension lecture, but they didn't settle the problem either for me or for him.

I had the beautiful thought afterwards that I might have said "Never mind architecture. Never mind Italian art. Never mind the ancient or mediæval sanctity of Rome. In that city lies the grave of Keats, and the ashes of Shelley are buried in a casket there."

But even so I am not sure that I should have satisfied him. He had so many overcoats and I so little change.

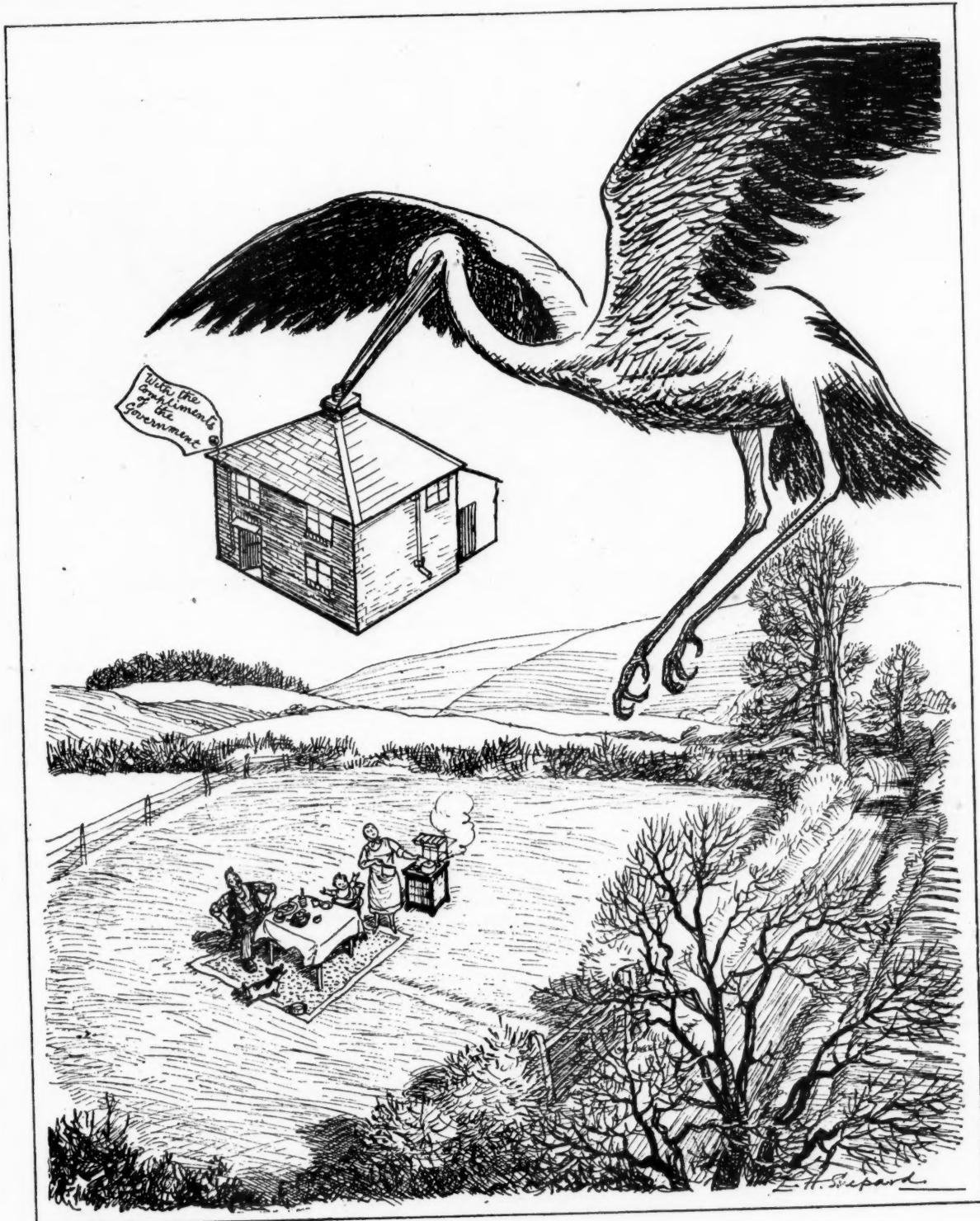
EVOE.

AN Officer in charge of a Comforts Depot to whom we have been able to send supplies of our wool writes:

"In a letter it is difficult for me adequately to express my gratitude for the valuable help you give us, thus enabling further supplies of knitted comforts to be dispatched to the soldiers overseas.

"I wish I were in the position to be able to thank personally all the supporters of your Fund, for I am most grateful for this aid to our work."

We also tender our thanks to all Subscribers, and in doing so beg them to continue their most valuable help by sending donations which will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouvierie Street, London, E.C.4.



THE HOME-COMING

[Pre-fabricated houses are now said to be in the air.]



"It looks like being a nice day—the balloons are very high."

The Phoney Phleet

XXXIX—H.M.S. "Blah"

A CHANGE came over Albert Trype
When he attained Commander's rank;
From being quite a normal type
He turned into a ghastly swank.

He showed this in a thousand ways,
But what was worse than all the rest
Was that he wore a perfect blaze
Of phoney medals on his breast.

And not alone upon his coat;
He might get hot and take that off,
Then how could anybody note
That he was a tremendous toff?

So he had ribbons everywhere—
His pullover, his pants, his vest;
And just in case they caught him bare
A row was painted on his chest.

By now I'm certain you expect
To read of Trype's decline and fall

And how his puffed-up pride was wrecked;
It doesn't go like that at all.

The truth is that the *Blah*, his ship,
Foundered when off some foreign shore.
The ten survivors had to strip
And swim eleven miles or more.

Arriving naked in the storm
Nine were at once bumped off as spies,
Their patent lack of uniform
Being an obvious disguise.

But Trype, the tenth, was taken in
And given something hot, and dried,
Since all those medals on his skin
Were demonstrably pro-Allied.

In short, because he was a cad
He's trotting round alive and hale.
So there, one might as well be bad—
That is the moral of this tale.

Up Where?

HE was an airman, genuine R.A.F.—and he looked shy. It is no good being shy. The thing to do in railway carriages is to start a conversation. So after clearing my throat for five minutes I said:

"Been up to-day?"

"Up?" he said. "Up where?"

"In the air," I said. "Flying."

"Oh, no, not to-day."

"Not much of a day for flying, I suppose?" I said, looking out of the window.

"I don't know," he said. "Haven't been up to-day."

"I know," I said. "Still . . ."

We sat and looked at the floor for a distance of perhaps four miles.

"What's it like, anyway, when you are up?" I said at last, and I added "in the air" to save time.

"How d'you mean, what's it like?" he said.

"Well," I said. "You know. What do you feel like when you're up there stooging around at 25,000 feet?"

He said, after a little thought, that he had never been higher than 22,000.

"Oh, well," I said, keeping my voice even, "what's it like at 22,000?"

"Cold," he said.

"I bet it is," I said. "Still it must be rather grand up there. I suppose you can see pretty well the whole of England and the coast of France and the Channel and so on? Just like a map, I imagine it must be."

"No," he said. "Not like a map."

"No?"

"No. You can't see the lines."

"Railway lines?" I asked, surprised.

"Lines of longitude and latitude," he explained.

"You're pulling my leg," I cried.

"No, no, it's a fact," he said earnestly. "You really can't see them. So it doesn't look much like a map, naturally."

"I hadn't thought of that," I said. "And for another thing, of course, it hasn't got 'Printed and published by the National Map Publishing Company, Ltd.' in the bottom right-hand corner."

"What hasn't?" he said.

"Why, what you see when you're up there at 22,000 feet."

"Printed and published by the National Map Publishing Company, Ltd.!" he said, and he looked at me as if he thought I had taken leave of my senses.

I began to think he was rather a silly sort of chap for an airman, and I was blown if I was going to have him thinking me even sillier.

"Listen!" I told him, "I said it

must look like a map from 22,000 feet—I mean the ground must look like a map—and you said it didn't because there weren't any lines on it, and I said it hasn't got 'Printed and published,' and all the rest of it at the bottom right-hand corner either."

"There is no bottom right-hand corner when you're stooging around," he said.

I gave it up and sat staring at my right foot. There are people you can talk to and people you can't, and one's got to recognize the fact. The toe of my right shoe turns up rather distressingly, I noticed, so I put it behind my left calf and stared instead at the telegraph wires going up and down.

"Even if there was such a thing," said the airman suddenly, "you couldn't possibly see it at 22,000 feet. Not unless the print was extraordinarily large."

"All right," I said. "I'm convinced. Let's change the subject." And I sought about desperately in my mind for other matters of aeronautical interest.

"Do you notice the roar of the engine much?" I asked at last.

"Doesn't bother me, thanks," he said. "Would you like the window up?"

"Up?" I said, losing all patience with the man. "Up where?"

We didn't speak again, but as he got out I noticed he was shaking his head and I heard him muttering to himself, "Printed and published by the National Map Publishing Company," "Printed and published by the

National Map Publishing Company," over and over again. I rather think he went straight off up to 22,000 feet to have a look.

H. F. E.

L'Exactitude

DEAR SIR,—May one be allowed space in your columns to suggest that more careful thought be given to the naming of our post-war houses than appears to have been done heretofore?

One feels that the situation, as it stands at the moment, calls for improvement.

In one's own immediate vicinity, for example, one finds "Dunroamin" occupied by a gentleman who commercially represents, "Dilkusha" to be the residence of a crabbed and lonely bachelor, and "Phyllstan" wherein live a certain George and Emily.

Furthermore, sir, whilst it is thrilling (to one who is proud to number Drake among his ancestors) to port one's helm (figuratively speaking) opposite "Cadiz" when journeying to one's ledgers each morning, it must be disconcerting indeed to those of one's neighbours who are devotees of accuracy in its strictest form to tend one's vegetables in "Shanklin" under the critical eyes of the master of "L'Ancresse."

L'exactitude, s'il vous plaît!

I am, sir, Yours, etc.,
Mon Repos FATHER OF FIVE.



"... then I know by the length of Timothy's lead if we're at the station."

At the Pictures

NOTHING FRESH

IT is at first a little surprising that JAMES CAGNEY should have chosen for his first independent production a good old "warm-hearted" sentimental story that might just as well have been chosen for him by any one of the big producing companies. Second thoughts suggest that he may be meaning to play safe with the box-office the first time so as to strengthen his position for experimenting later; but second thoughts also bring to mind the acknowledged truth that the equivalent aim in literature ("I'll make a name with popular stuff and then write *good* stuff") has defeated everybody that was ever tempted by it.

Meanwhile, *Johnny Vagabond* (Director: WILLIAM K. HOWARD), though not particularly inspired, is quite worth seeing if you like Mr. CAGNEY. The fable is one of those affairs about a passer-by—in this instance, a tramp—who stays just long enough to put everything right, and then ambles on again talking (or singing) about the delights of the open road and no responsibilities—the framework of so many hundreds of popular picaresque novels. The place is the little town of Plattsburgh, the time 1906, the trouble political graft and blackmail, the victim the old lady who owns and runs a local newspaper, the rescuer a tramp (Mr. CAGNEY) who used to be a newspaperman himself. You can work out the details for yourself from that; hardly any of them are fresh. The part of the old lady "introduced to the screen" a stage actress, GRACE GEORGE, who seems a little worried by the lights and has a tendency to load with infinite soft-eyed charm and wisdom even such a remark as "You'll find some old razors on the shelf in the closet"; but then it is, after all, that sort of part, and many will delight in it.

In some remarks recently about the film variety-show, or string of turns, I said that there seems to be an assumption that audiences will not accept it without a connecting "story," heavily over-emotionalized to give it

enough weight to hold up against the big stars in the separate items. Now *Thousands Cheer* (Director: GEORGE SIDNEY) strikes me as having been made as it were the other way round. Quite possibly I'm wrong, but the impression I get is that this set out to be a popular "musical" starring only KATHRYN GRAYSON and, perhaps, JOSE ITURBI the pianist, about a colonel's daughter who sings for the boys and falls in love with a private who was a trapeze artist, and that the miscellaneous M-G-M stars with their turns (MICKEY ROONEY, JUDY GARLAND, ELEANOR POWELL, FRANK MORGAN, ANN SOTHERN and the others) were stuffed in at the end in a "camp show" to brighten things up.

As they do: the whole picture is an amusing and tuneful miscellany with some pleasing colour.



[*Johnny Vagabond*]

THE KNIGHTLY HOBO

<i>Tom Richards</i>	JAMES CAGNEY
<i>Vinnie McLeod</i>	GRACE GEORGE



[*Thousands Cheer*]

PATRIOTIC CHORUS

<i>Kathryn Jones</i>	KATHRYN GRAYSON
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The old piece of variegated nonsense called *Phantom of the Opera* (Director: ARTHUR LUBIN) turns up again with all the additional variegations that money can buy, including Technicolor and oceans of music and song, mostly hashed up from Chopin and Tchaikovsky (the only smell of a real opera that we get, apart from a half-obliterated poster advertising *Don Giovanni*, is a bit of *Martha*). CLAUDE RAINS is the violinist who most uncharacteristically (but foresees the popular taste of the nineteen-forties) writes a piano concerto, thinks it has been stolen from him, and becomes the Phantom who lives in a sewer beneath the Paris Opera and sets out to murder everybody who stands in the way of his protégée's career; SUSANNA FOSTER is the protégée, one of those understudies who are better than the leading lady, and NELSON EDDY is the baritone who loves her, both of them in magnificent voice throughout; EDGAR BARRIER is his rival of the Sûreté. At the end the Phantom's mask is removed and we get a close-up of his acid-scarred face in full colour . . . if you consider that an added attraction. R. M.

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

THE following fragment is the by-product of a window-cleaning contest I entered for at a vicarage fête in aid of bison, which are apparently tending to get extinct in the United States and require assistance. When the gun was fired we were all to run up to the house and clean our allotted window, and the first one you could see through had been cleaned by the winner. After a false start, owing to someone having left a silencer on the gun and only a man with very acute hearing noticing when it went off, the race began. I had drawn a stained-glass window in the porch, and as washing did not get it much more transparent, except round the edges, I tried pumice-stone, emery-paper, and finally some stuff I found lying about in the tool-shed which was guaranteed to remove any stain but had no effect, apart from turning a halo ginger. While I was waiting for it to work, however, I composed, and what my composition turned out to be was this:

SPANGLED BUT PURE

(The scene is a garden containing trees, grass and flowers, lakes and the members of a house-party.)

"CHINA" BRUCE. Not since the publication of *The Origin of Species*—

LESTER TESTER. Plural, maestro, please.

"CHINA" BRUCE. Nonsense! Gold is always referred to in the singular. This book was a shrewd blow at economists of the school of Ricardo. They never recovered from it.

LESTER TESTER. You are misinformed. Species is a noun from the adjective specious, and the book is a repertoire, historically arranged, of excuses suitable for use in the best society.

"CHINA" BRUCE. As I was saying, not since the publication of that epoch-making work has such a flutter been caused in dovecotes and elsewhere as by my first lithograph, now on exhibition at the public baths, Newport, Mon. The subject is The Action of Atropine on Pupils, and it has been extensively canvassed in the educational world.

YOUNG ROY DOOM. Surely were it to be canvassed by anybody it would be by the lithographer, though even that would be unusual.

LESTER TESTER. Not so unusual as something that happened to a butler of ours back in the days when we were all children together and not, as now, spaced out. His hair suddenly began to grow and

grow, so that he had to wear it in two long plaits. Luckily it stopped at four feet three.

MOULOU MUMFITT. As far as hair goes I am keeping up to specification fairly well, but in the last ten months I have lost thirty-five pounds avoirdupois and fifty sterling; one goes with the other you know, but not quite so fast.

"CHINA" BRUCE. Now I like a woman with a bit of flesh on her: it sort of furnishes a room.

LESTER TESTER. I like very tall, very thin women who are good at bêzique. So far I have met only two, and those fled me like startled fawns.

MOULOU MUMFITT. How gauche!

"CHINA" BRUCE. Talking of fawns reminds me of a hand I used to have on my yacht, the *Sailor and Cutter*, who tried to get promotion by fawning on the captain and me. He used to dive down to the bottom of the ship and break off barnacles and bits of coral and shyly offer them to us as gifts, but keel-hauling cured him. Walking the plank wasn't much good, as he had been a tight-rope walker and despised it.

YOUNG ROY DOOM. In the old days I wrote this verse in the visitors' book at the Viceregal Lodge:

There is something about coral
Which encourages people to be immoral.
A lagoon tends to be even bluer
Than a sewer.

[A trio enters and plays Old English Dances. They are armed with banjo, tuba and triangle. They leave without making any recruits, and the guests are then entertained by a SOPHIST.

SOPHIST. Will any gentleman oblige me by defining virtue? Don't all speak at once. You, sir? Thank you, sir.

"CHINA" BRUCE. Vertu is what inlaid tables and cameos are the objects of, a kind of discriminating covetousness.

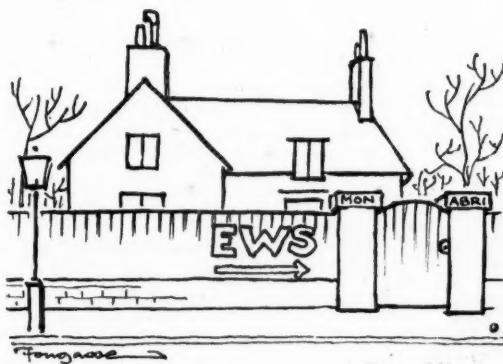
YOUNG ROY DOOM. I should like to put in a plea for tapestry.

LESTER TESTER. Isn't that rather large? Objects of vertu are frequently small enough to stand on other objects of vertu, though, it follows, not invariably.

MRS. BIRD OF RYE. I wish this man would go away. Last year we had a sword-swallowing and he was much more fun. He had hiccoughs.

[Exit SOPHIST, baffled

FINIS





"Cor chase me round the 'ouses! 'Ere! we've only just got in and it's ninepence already!"

The Sergeant-Major

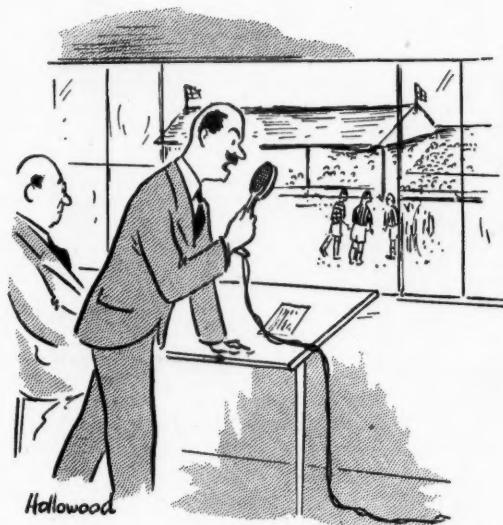
WITH us ther was a sergeant of the line
That wolde wenden to Saint Thomas shrine;
Accoutred was he lyk a manne-at-armes
That late was y-comen from allarmes
Of werre and batail to our compayne.
I dorste seyn he hadde a glaryng ye
That wolde wel affrighten everich knave
If he were out of steppe or nat y-shave;
For Shun he cryde, and Halt, and Right Aboute:
Lyk thonder wolde he rampagen and shouthe
That al the grund was by the sounre y-shake;
Hem seemed it were right an earthe-quake.
Sweren he colde and cursen, permafoy:
His grettest ooth was nat by sýent Loy,
And wo was any man that tak nat heedee.
His chekes were with shoutyng hote and reede;
Up-on his overlippe his heyre was blak
That bristled as it were a pigges bak;
And certeinly his chere nas nat gay.
But for to tellen yow of his array:
His hat up-on his heed was perched a-syde;
Of karkye was his habergeoun and wyde
And girded at the hippes with a pin;
Fulle were his trousern, and he had ther-in
A wallet depe as a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he sayde, caried al his geer.
About his botes was an ankle-holde,
And ther-on heng his bagges in a folde;
Up-on his arme he bar the kinges croune.
This worthy sergeant marched us out of toune.

Pictures

BEFORE I get going on the subject of pictures I had better explain, so as to disappoint those of my readers who are here by mistake, that by a picture I mean something with sharp corners and hanging up by picture-wire. In a word, culture. Pictures are an important branch of culture, and culture is an important branch of human nature. At one time sociologists thought culture to be something which mankind has gone to such lengths to acquire so as to distinguish itself from animals, but I think it is now recognized that what mankind acquires culture for is to distinguish itself from the rest of mankind. My readers have only to imagine themselves in front of a picture which, through no fault of their own, some friend has asked their opinion of, to know exactly what I mean. I shall get back to this aspect of pictures later in this article.

There are many kinds of pictures in the world, both coloured and not coloured, and the coloured sort can be divided into those painted in oils and those not. We can tell an oil-painting at a glance by running a finger over it, when we shall find that it has no glass over it and that the paint has a curious uneven surface which has collected a certain amount of dust, though luckily not enough to show where we have run our finger over it. I say "luckily" because all this only happens when we are left alone in someone else's drawing-room. An oil-painting can get away with quite a lot of dust, which is both why and because it is not covered in with glass. A water-colour, on the other hand, always has glass over it, not so much because of the dust as because a water-colour is traditionally painted by someone's relation, and is therefore given the best that money can buy. If an oil-painting has been painted by someone's relation, then the relationship is subsidiary to the painting, and not, as with water-colours, the other way round. Besides oil-paintings and water-colours there are several technical kinds of coloured picture of which the general public finds it needs to know no more than that no one's relations will have painted them. (This question of relationship is important as it plays a large part in the judging of a picture, and will also be dealt with later.) If a picture is not coloured it is usually black and white; that is, it was white already, and has had black added to make it a picture. Such a picture is apt to have a lot of extra white round it, the idea being to create a kind of psychological moat to keep off the non-swimmers.

A picture can be taller than it is wide or longer than it is high, and it can be almost any size, but whatever its size and shape a picture will, when taken down from the wall, leave a patch of exactly the same size and shape. It will be a clean patch, but will have the effect of a dirty patch. Mathematicians call this relativity. It is more fun, if more difficult, to put a picture up on a wall than to take one down, because people putting up pictures feel that they are doing something so final as to be making history. That is why it is so important to have someone else around to confirm that each picture is going up at the right level as regards the other pictures. There are no set rules for the right level, only a sort of artistic telepathy which exempts either person afterwards from blaming the other. A picture can be hung from a big hook on a picture-rail or a little hook driven into the wall with special nails. It is either easy or impossible to attach a little hook to a wall, and it is just plain impossible to get a hook up on a picture-rail until it is up, when it proves to have been just



"Wilson, the Rovers' centre-forward, has the ball at the moment. He seems to have mended the puncture and is now looking round anxiously for a pump."

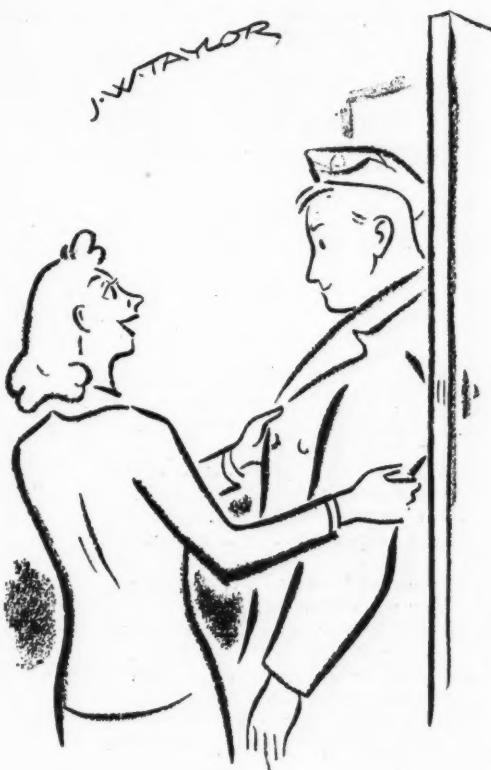
plain difficult; it is done with the handle end of a walking-stick, and the process was invented to make art worth while in the days when art was still working its passage. To hang a picture up it is also necessary for the hangers-up to assure themselves—that is, to be assured by someone else—that they have twisted the ends of the picture-wire round so firmly that the fate of the picture is now in its own hands. To hang a picture straight, that is, level with itself, is fairly easy, the person adjusting it having only to forgo consciousness temporarily and become an instrument of the other person's will.

It is often said that after a time pictures merge into a room and are no longer noticed. Nothing could be less accurate because, as everyone knows, any pictures in any room, and the more merged the better, are apt to be noticed passionately by anyone who sees them. For example, anyone brooding over a grievance and happening to be within range of, say, a water-colour of a good rocky coastline will take a rock and worry it to bits, so that after five minutes rock and grievance are indistinguishable. Yet a few hours later someone else, or even the same person, may be using the rock to work out income-tax with. This, psychologists tell us, is one of the main purposes of art, and one which has never been fully recognized.

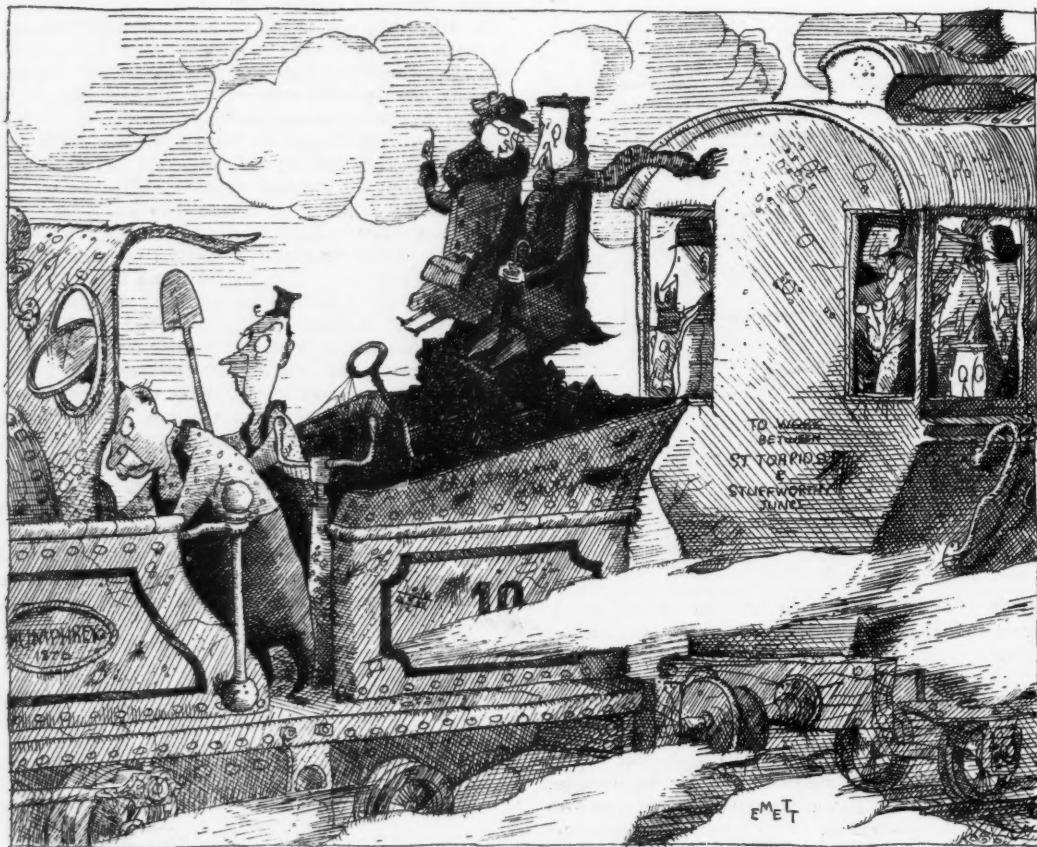
Now I want to say something about what happens when we look at a picture as a picture; when, as I was mentioning earlier on, someone else leads us up to a picture and asks us what we think of it. This is, psychologically speaking, a particularly interesting occasion, because although it is so traditional there is no conventional get-out for the ignorant. Nature has helped them by making the average picture difficult to see because of the shine on it, but even so it is impossible to use up more than one minute in finding the right angle without seeming even more foolish than such people know they are about to seem. Nature, again, has equipped those who know

too little with perceptions denied those who know too much; they are keenly alive to the water-colour problem, and will never say anything about a water-colour, unless perhaps that it is very nice, until they have settled who did it. The same goes for an oil-painting, because it is equally obvious that someone must have done it; but any sort of reproduction is a different problem. This kind of picture is best looked at from some way off, and then quite suddenly close to; at least so the ignorant, who have worked it out for themselves, hope. Experts, on the other hand, face a different problem; they feel dimly that they have been given so many words but have no clue to whether it is fifty or two thousand, or if their opening paragraph is being listened to as if in big or small type. This throws them out. They are apt to step back suddenly and knock chairs over. Taking it all round, the ignorant and the experts probably look equally foolish on such an occasion, but, as always, the ignorant are the ones who feel it most.

Finally, a few more words about those people left alone in a strange room. At such times pictures come into their own, along with photographs, books, knitting and the maker's name on a clock-face. But what makes pictures specially interesting to people having a quick look round a strange room is that they are either different from those in their own homes or identical with them; and, psychologists say, if there is one thing which establishes other people as other people more than finding unfamiliar pictures in strange houses, it is, of course, finding familiar ones.



"A forty-eight, darling? How marvellous! I'd just decided I'd better do all the ceilings myself."



" . . . and I asked him for two seats facing the engine, and HE said well, there's a war on, but he'd see what he could do. . . . "

Blood and Iron

(*A Report from Reuter*)

IT is the Germans' boast that they
Are hard and tough as granite.
It may be true; I couldn't say
Precisely what began it;
And, further to support their claims,
They've banned with German rigour
Such fancy or baptismal names
That sap the youthful vigour.

Those that have casually been apt
For use with either gender
Must be without exception scrapped
As verging on the tender;
All must be firmly Aryan, though
In this respect they bar Jews
Whose nomenclature has to show
Quite plainly that they *are* Jews.

The German sire too often gives
His little fondling chick names
That may be soft diminutives
Or little German nicknames,

But affectations such as that
Will henceforth be uprooted;
He'll have to call his Aryan brat
Plain Aryan undiluted.

Their argument is clear enough.
"Dodo," we'll say, or "Fifi"
Will never make a prattler tough
Or, as an adult, beefy,
And, little Hans, a people's hope,
If watered down to "Hansy"
Might wilt and weaken 'neath the dope
And grow a German pansy.

Parents there may be here and there
So blind and so devoted
As to remark that they don't care
And dote as aye they've doted,
But 'twould be well for such to damp
The inner fires that burn them
Lest some cold concentration camp
May all too surely learn them. DUM-DUM.



THE LAST THROW

"If I must fall, at least I shall not fall alone."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, February 8th.—House of Lords: Homes for Heroes are Promised.

House of Commons: Pre-Post-War Atmosphere Creeps In.

Wednesday, February 9th.—House of Lords: Grim Necessity is Reported.

House of Commons: Education Goes On.

Thursday, February 10th.—House of Commons: P.A.Y.E.

Tuesday, February 8th.—The House of Commons went all post-war—and pre-war—to-day. All sorts of things happened that used to happen in the piping days of peace, but which have lately been—as the waiters say—"off."

As soon as the House assembled the process started. Major MILNER, Chairman of Ways and Means, nonchalantly brought forward a number of small Bills, asking formally for their passing. Normally, Members listlessly let things slide, silently allow the Bills to pass by default.

But to-day, quite suddenly, 'Jeet came on the scene again. In peace-time 'Jeet was the most powerful factor in the whole of Parliament's procedure, but it "went out" with the advent of war, and the many new Members who have come into the Commons since the war began knew it not.

'Jeet is all-powerful. Before it, Bills wilt and die, business shrinks and fades. M.P.s in charge of Bills not infrequently shrink and fade too in face of the all-powerful dictatorial 'Jeet.

Who or what is 'Jeet? It is the Parliamentary form of that simple word "Object!" and it means that a Member objects to the passing of an item of business, and this in turn means that it cannot pass during the period allotted to *unopposed* business.

So Government Chief Whip JAMES STUART sat up with a jerk when the shouts whizzed about his head, but they spread with the speed of a Goebbels lie, and soon young Members who can never have heard the cry before were yelling with the best of them.

Old denizens of the Press Gallery thought wistfully of the days of long ago—even more wistfully perhaps of the days that are to come. In fact every prospect pleased and only Major MILNER was wild.

Then Mr. CHURCHILL wandered in (he really did wander around, collecting Order-papers and things in a ruminative manner from all sorts of

places) and brought back another touch of the pre-war by reintroducing a form of Parliamentary answer popular with Lord BALDWIN (although not with his inquisitors) in the days of long ago.

He was asked by Mr. R. R. STOKES to set up an inquiry into "waste of many millions of pounds on ineffective tanks." Standing up with great deliberation, and turning over his notes with even more care and precision, the Prime Minister replied, crisply:

"No, sir!"

Having delivered this pronouncement—his only words of the day—Mr. CHURCHILL went out again, complete with entourage, notes, and all.



"The agreement fixes the rate of exchange at 200 frs. = £1."—*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*

Mr. STOKES, frowning darkly, mentioned that he would raise a debate... anon. Mr. CHURCHILL did not even pause in his stride.

It was a pity he went out so soon, for a few moments later the Chief Whip introduced the new Member for Brighton, Flight-Lieutenant WILLIAM TEELING, whose election had brought a whiff of the salty ocean of pre-war politics to our national life. Mr. CHURCHILL, in a letter that will surely figure in the history-books, had spoken of the "attempted swindle" of Mr. TEELING's opponent in asking for votes as a supporter of the Premier. And there was much ado about it all, until Mr. TEELING got in by some 1,900 votes.

Your scribe foresees some future fun over the advent of Mr. TEELING, for there is already in the House a Mr. KEELING. To-day, as Mr. Speaker

called Mr. KEELING to ask a question (about wrist-watch glasses, which a Minister, amid ironical laughter, said were plentiful), Mr. TEELING, waiting anxiously to be introduced, clutched like some wedding best-man at his breast pocket, feeling for his Writ of Return, so soon to be handed as credentials to the Clerk of the House. However, Mr. Speaker's enunciation is always beyond reproach, and perhaps it will be all right on the night. But, again, it may not be.

Sir FRANK SANDERSON is not given to making jokes in the House, but he put over a beauty to-day. Trouble was that it seemed to have been unconscious; but then all the best jokes are, in Parliament at any rate.

Sir LEONARD LYLE had said that a man described by the police as one of Britain's most adept pick-pockets had found a temporary job in the Civil Service, and Sir JOHN ANDERSON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, replied that while every possible precaution was taken, an occasional mistake in war-time was inevitable.

Sir LEONARD worked off a carefully-prepared jape about the man having been employed in the Inland Revenue in the collection of income-tax, but Sir FRANK SANDERSON completely stole the picture with the question: "Is it not highly desirable that the Government should conserve so far as practicable our power of investment?"

Sir JOHN looked a bit dazed. Sir LEONARD looked green with envy because he had not thought of this subtle one. Sir FRANK looked a bit puzzled, then quite a lot crestfallen as Sir THOMAS MOORE and others gesticulated at him.

Distinctly red in the face, Sir FRANK then rose and apologized. His supplementary question had been meant to apply to the next question on the Order-paper, about investments in Latin America. For quite some time, there was what the Press used to call (*Laughter*).

The business of the day was the Committee stage of the Education Bill. Mr. "RAB" BUTLER, weighed down with his brief, faced some four hundred amendments, and politely declined to agree to a proposal that he should cease to be "President" of a non-existent "Board of Education" and should instead become plain "Minister of Education."

In the Lords, Lord PORTAL promised that the same men and equipment that had made the war homes for the heroes of the R.A.F. should, ere long, be turned to the task of making peace



"Curious thing! they once had the reputation of serving the best filets de sole Marquay in London."

homes for all our heroes—civilian and Service alike. Which pleased their lordships mightily.

Wednesday, February 9th.—That age-old formula about "Not in the public interest" which has averted many an awkward answer in the House of Commons, itself got into trouble to-day. The process is simple: When a Minister is asked a question, the answer to which he thinks will injure the public interest—and there are many such in war-time—then he replies that it would not be in the public interest to give the necessary information.

And, by the rules of the House, that is that. No more is allowed to be said.

But to-day Mr. ROBERTSON asked a question about the manufacture of penicillin, and Mr. C. U. PEAT, for the Ministry of Supply, made the traditional response. Mr. ROBERTSON acidly commented that this plea was being used too much, and Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN, not bothering to stand up, yelled across the floor that the "Government was hiding behind the formula all the time."

Questions over, up got Mr. BEVAN,

this time with a point of order. Should not the SPEAKER protect the interests of M.P.s asking questions, he wanted to know, as well as the "public interest" as seen by Ministers. And should not Ministers have to justify their claim that a piece of information was "not in the public interest."

The SPEAKER pointed out that even Ministers had their rights in the House, and this seemed to anger Mr. BEVAN still more.

Then Mr. PEAT explained that revelation of the precise places where penicillin is being made would give the foe valuable information and perhaps prejudice the production of what might be of far greater value to us than any secret weapon.

The House said, "Hear, hear!" Mr. BEVAN sat muttering, and the SPEAKER called the next business. And so we went on to the second day of the Committee stage of the Education Bill.

There was held in the Upper House one of those little debates which are, in essence, the great difference between dictatorship and democracy.

In obvious sincerity, the Bishop of CHICHESTER (what an orator he is!)

raised a discussion on what he called the "blind" bombing of German towns, making it abundantly plain that he had no sort of criticism to make of the gallant crews who heroically carry out their duty. It was the policy of the Government he was calling into question.

Was it necessary that we, in combating Nazi methods, should adopt them? the Bishop asked. Could inhumanity ever be justified?

Lord CRANBORNE, for the Government, replied that bombing was a grim necessity and would go on until victory was won. Only thus could lives be saved—for the bombing would shorten the war, in the end reduce the toll of misery.

Thursday, February 10th.—Sir JOHN ANDERSON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved a Bill to extend the benefits of pay-as-you-earn income tax to the over £600 salary-earner.

This was approved. Then there was a barney over the Government's power to permit M.P.s to take jobs under the Crown without having to resign. People got red in the face and bawled at each other, but nothing came of it.

Misleading Cases

Haddock v. Mole

MR. JUSTICE CHEESE to-day delivered a considered judgment in the Orange Globes Case.

His Lordship said: The plaintiff in this enthralling dispute is a Mr. Albert Haddock, who, although a mariner, is solicitous for the safety of the pedestrian ashore. He has assured the Court that he brings this action as a "test" case for the guidance of all road-users, and does not in fact desire to receive for his own benefit the very substantial sum of damages which has been delicately suggested by his counsel. This somewhat improbable story is no concern of the Court, whose only business is to ascertain the truth of the facts in dispute and the law, if any, which applies to them.

The plaintiff, whose evidence, though unconventionally delivered, I take to be trustworthy, was crossing the Strand at one of the official "pedestrian crossings" instituted by Regulations made under the Road Traffic Act, 1934. These crossings were the invention of a Minister of Transport who, after many years of increasing slaughter on the roads, formed the new and startling opinion that the safety and comfort of pedestrians were of at least equal importance as the impatience of those who were fortunate enough to travel by car: and, though it is not for the Court to look behind an Act of Parliament to any personality, we were informed that they will always be gratefully associated with the name of a Mr. Hore Belisha.

Now, the duty of any driver approaching such a crossing is defined in the Regulations as follows: "He shall, unless he can see that there is no foot-passenger there, proceed at such a speed as to be able, if necessary, to stop before reaching such crossing." So that at these crossings the visible foot-passenger, at least, has a statutory right to life and limb.

But, for the Regulations to be effective, it was necessary that the crossing as well as the foot-passenger should be distinguishable by the motor-driver. For at other points, it is generally understood, the motorist is entitled to mow the foot-passenger down in the usual way. Therefore, they were marked by two rows of studs on the carriage-way, and, at each end, by a post painted alternately in black and white and surmounted by a globe of a distinctive orange

colour, reminding the romantic of a harvest moon.

Unfortunately, in the years 1940 and 1941, many of these orange globes were destroyed by enemy action: others were removed or shattered by the impulsive soldiery of other lands, or by that type of indigenous citizen which delights to place unwanted perambulators in the emergency water-supply tanks thoughtfully provided against the burning of the capital.

It was such a crossing, clearly indicated, that is, by the posts and the studs but not by orange globes, that Mr. Haddock lawfully elected to cross the Strand. He used, he assured the Court, all due consideration towards the drivers of motors, who in such a thoroughfare are not without anxieties of their own. With many other pedestrians, he patiently permitted about thirty vehicles to rush by, and when at last he stepped on to the carriage-way, raising his hand by way of additional warning, the nearest vehicles, he says, were not less than seventy-five yards away. Two of them bore on notwithstanding, the drivers laughing heartily, and at such a speed that the plaintiff was compelled to retreat in haste and ignominy to the pavement. A little later he made a second attempt, again, he says, with all due caution and consideration. This time the defendant was at the wheel of the leading vehicle; and he too continued on his course without slackening speed. Mr. Haddock, fortunately, was able to preserve his life, and to gain the "refuge" by a sudden, swift leap upward and forward, "in the manner," to use his own vivid phrase, "of an elderly chamois."

But life is not everything, and the exceptional effort severely aggravated a leg injury sustained elsewhere, which otherwise might not have troubled him much. His own impression, he said, was "that the car passed underneath him," possibly an exaggeration. It is clear at least that for the safety of the plaintiff, lawfully "there," it was necessary for the defendant to stop before he reached the crossing, and that he did not stop, and, moreover, that he was unable to stop, according to the regulation.

But, says Mr. Haddock, the defendant heaped insult upon injury; for as he whizzed away he shouted back "Can't you see there ain't no orange balls?"

This impudent plea he actually

maintained, though with less and less conviction, at the hearing of the action. The plea is that the absence of the orange globes deprives the regulation of effect and the crossing of consideration. But there are still the studs and the black-and-white posts. And even if such a suggestion had any practical or ethical validity, it would not, clearly, assist a driver who recognizes the posts sufficiently to remark that they support no orange globes.

Further, unfortunately for the defendant, the sly excuse has been anticipated by those in authority, and the Regulations have been so amended as to make it plain that the driver's duties are the same whether orange globes are visible or not. The defendant says that he did not know of that amendment; but he has been driving for a very long time, and it is his duty, at his peril, to know the law. None the less, it is for consideration whether, for the benefit of impetuous drivers and their victims, some additional sign, as prominent as the orange globe though less expensive, should not soon be provided at these crossings.

For they are valuable; they should be used by the walker, and respected by the driver. And when I say "respected", I mean respected fully, in letter and in spirit. The walker's right at these crossings is not a mere right to escape with his life, after a moment of fear, by leaping into the air "like an elderly chamois" or mountain goat. It is a right to proceed across the road without anxiety at a normal pace, or even, if he be infirm or elderly, at a slow pace; and if motor-cars are compelled thereby to go slow or even stop, so much the better. The more cars stopped or slowed the less work for the doctor and the undertaker. That is the sad and sobering fact. On every day of 1943 three hundred and thirty-five persons were killed or injured on the roads of England and Wales. For the month of December the figure was 394. Only 850 fewer persons were killed in 1943 than in 1938, when the motor-vehicles were immensely more numerous. There is, I know, a notion current that those who dart about at high speed are exhibiting their loyalty to the cause of the United Nations and somehow assisting that cause to victory. This is not necessarily so: and very strong evidence will have to be produced in this Court before that easy assumption

is accepted. The defendant must pay the plaintiff £5,000 damages; and in my opinion he should be executed. For reasons, however, which are hidden from the Court, the Legislature is more concerned for his life than he is for others.'

A. P. H.

• • •
Life

NOT till after the fifth gin-and-lime does Lieutenant Sympson forget his immediate problems and talk about Life, and fortunately there is rarely enough gin in the Mess to carry him so far. The fact that Major Fibbing and Captain Hollyhook were both in Cairo last week on what they referred to as "business," however, enabled the subalterns to enjoy themselves, and when somebody mentioned Sir William Beveridge after we had been at the bar for some time Sympson fired up at once.

"His plan," he said, "is interesting, but it does not go far enough. It fails to provide for some of the most important members of the community. I mean the black market."

I couldn't see what connection Beveridge had with the black market, though I must admit that in Egypt the black market is a much more respectable institution than in England, and a man who is well thought of in Egyptian black-market circles has much the same standing as a man at home who has been seen in the Royal Enclosure at Ascot.

I pointed this out to Sympson, but he just said "Don't interrupt. I'm not talking about the Egyptian black market. Nobody would ever buy in the Egyptian black market if they looked at the Naafi price-list. Not of course that the Naafi ever has in stock more than a small percentage of the things they mention on their price-list, but just the thought that you would be able to buy things so much cheaper if the Naafi stocked them is enough to stop you buying in the black market."

I said that I still didn't see what Beveridge had to do with even the English black market.

"The point is," he said, sipping his gin-and-lime in the thoughtful way people do when the gin is made in Egypt and the lime has no label at all, "that after the war the English black market will stop. At first of course the black marketeers will be able to carry on bravely, keeping up appearances with a sort of wistful smile, on the funds they have accumulated

during this all-too-short war. But the day will come when they will go to the bank and the cashier will look at their cheque in a frozen sort of way and then go and consult the man in the glass case, who will hurry off to the manager and then come back and say that Head Office . . ."

"Still," I said, "where does Beveridge come in?"

"He doesn't," said Sympson, "and that's what I complain about. These black marketeers will simply qualify for their miserable £2 16s. (or whatever it is) per week, just as if they had been ordinary common soldiers and airmen. And think of their children! It stands to reason that the children of fathers who have broken every law of decency and betrayed their country in

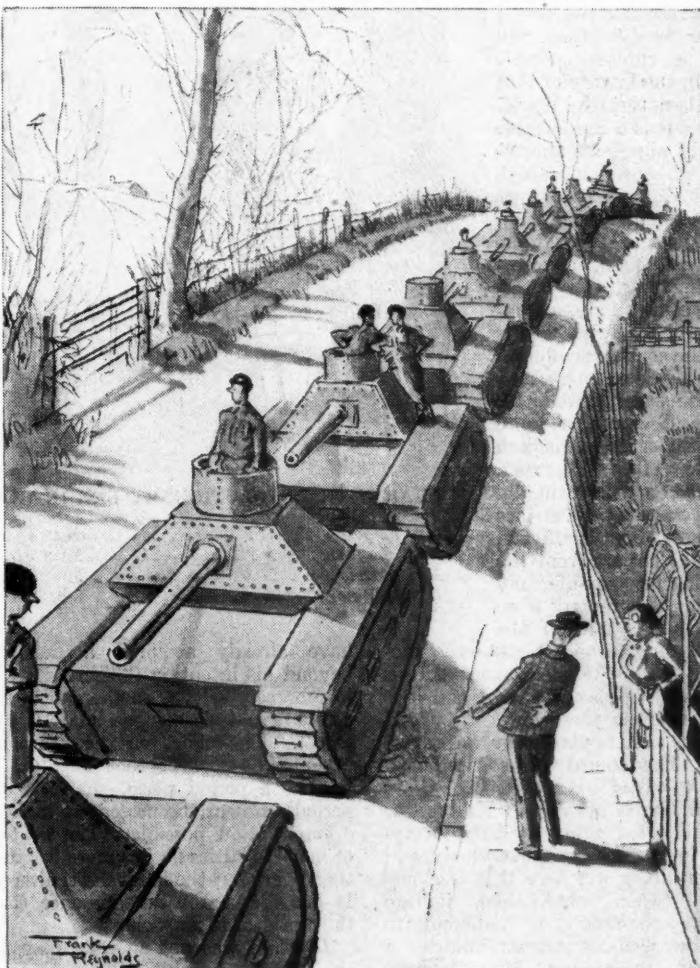
her hour of crisis (and all that) will start at a tremendous disadvantage unless the Government realizes their plight in time. Beveridge has shirked the issue. The son of every black marketeer should automatically be granted a scholarship to Eton."

Fortunately Sympson suddenly fell backwards at this stage and lay flat and stiff on the settee, so we just carried him to bed and put the liver salts within easy reach of his hand for the morning.

• • •

"COMBINED Desk - Bookcase, Chest of drawers, Single Bed (wood) and Hall Stand."
Advt. in Kent paper.

What, no stove?



"Yes, I shall be glad when they've passed—I have a bicycle under there!"

At the Play

"A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS" (WYNDHAM'S)

THE drama's laws the drama's patrons give, and the patrons of *Quiet Week-end* and *George and Margaret* have laid down pretty strict rules for the popular domestic comedy. It has been hinted that this is not the highest form of drama, and Mr. Graham Greene in particular has written that "jealousy and passion can fill any number of acts, but the misadventures of George and Margaret cannot." But it also has an immense following, and there is no doubt that the latest and by far the funniest example, REGINALD BECKWITH'S *A Soldier for Christmas*, will have a run remarkable even in the history of that marathon theatre, Wyndham's. It is a comfortable comedy about an uncomfortable household, which includes at various times a Buchmanite cook, unwisely engaged through the *New Statesman*, a cigar-smoking (yes, it's a real cigar) county lady, a communist charlady who gloats over the coming revolution while she does the upstairs bedrooms, and, final flutter in the dovecote, a more than life-sized Canadian private (BOB BEATTY), who, when asked timidly by his hostess what strikes him most about the Army, replies: "Apart from the gap in my sex-life, my boots." This remark is no more than a hint of Mr. BECKWITH'S strongest suit—the dialogue. In this he is supreme. All his lines fall in pleasant places, and it is a joy to hear these airy, witty and delicious scenes played by an expert cast. The comedy is so well-oiled that it seems to act itself. Quite outstanding is Miss JOAN HARBN as an embittered wife who bores everybody, knows she bores everybody, and goes on doing it. Now that Cockney maids (when obtainable) imitate actresses so closely, it is difficult to tell how well an actress imitates a Cockney maid, but Miss MERIEL FORBES gives a delightful version. Miss JOYCE BARBOUR repeats to perfection her performance in *George*

and Margaret as a harassed but valiant lady of the house, and Mr. LESLIE FRITH is excellent as the type of husband who cannot call his coupons his own.

P. M. F.

"LOYALTIES"

(THE A.D.C., CAMBRIDGE)

THERE will always be an England, but perhaps never again that England which JOHN GALSWORTHY drew in *Loyalties*. He wrote of Society with balanced irony: yet certain phrases

duties of fire-watcher and Home Guard. It isn't easy to find time to rehearse. It isn't easy to build scenery. Canvas is scarce and so is paint.

That the third act was the best was mainly due to two firm performances, by BRIAN RICHMOND as the grocer, and by FRANK DUNCAN (the producer and president of the club), as *Jacob Twisden*. Beyond his office windows was a scene which remarkably well reflected a lawyer's London. It was a sign that the A.D.C. had not forgotten the important tradition that

it does its own work. In the war of 1914 all cultural activities were closed down at the universities. In this war every effort has been made to keep them alive. A tremendous bustle of theatrical activity is the result: *Loyalties* is followed by the French Society's production of *Tartuffe*, and at the end of term the Marlowe Society and the A.D.C. present *King Lear*.

It means that this time the foundations are being carefully preserved of that experimental theatre in which, before the war, Cambridge had earned so just a reputation. W. L.



CHAR WITH REVOLUTIONARY BEE IN HER BONNET

Mr. Ferguson	MR. J. LESLIE FRITH
Mrs. Ferguson	MISS JOYCE BARBOUR
Mrs. Jarvis	MISS FRANCES WARING
Ronald Vines	MR. TREVOR HOWARD

have already acquired a meaning beyond his intention ("There's a war in Morocco." "For the honour of the Army avoid further scandal if you can"). The effect on the hearer is curious: he realizes that *Loyalties* is become a period piece, yet feels the period too near the present to make a differentiation possible. The contest of racial loyalties flashes more brightly than ever: but the language is altered. It has found a wider audience than the world of society clubs.

Loyalties was not an easy play for the A.D.C. to revive. But nothing is easy just now for men who are cramming a university course into a year's study with all the attendant state

same masterpieces. Can a weekly performance of any great creation arouse in him, however exquisite his sensibility, that exaltation that will release weekly a flow of heart's blood to his smoking pen and result in a critical gem?

Words have long since failed me on the subject of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto; suffice it that it is at present leading by two performances in the 1944 Concert Stakes with No. 3 in C Minor from the same stable coming up well on the rails and the rest of the field, including Tschaikowsky's B flat Minor Concerto and the Unfinished Symphony, jostling for places.

Among the performances that I have

Music in London

A MIXED COLLECTION

"THE good critic," said Anatole France, "is he who relates his soul's adventures among the masterpieces." He does not say for how long the music critic's soul can go on finding adventures among the

same masterpieces. Can a weekly performance of any great creation arouse in him, however exquisite his sensibility, that exaltation that will release weekly a flow of heart's blood to his smoking pen and result in a critical gem?

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Among the performances that I have

most enjoyed during the last few weeks was the recital of folk-songs at the National Gallery given by Jean Sterling Mackinlay. Her many-coloured striped robe reminds one of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Nor does the resemblance end there, for she has the magical gift of conjuring up as she sings visions of throngs of characters of folk-lore and fairy-tale—so vividly that one can almost see Cock Robin, Frère Jacques and all the rest. Equally delightful was the concert given by the Folk Dance and Song Society, where we went wassailing, were told by the Fleet Street Choir with much gusto about dark-eyed sailors, lovers' ghosts and so on, and revelled in a variety of the lovely tunes in which our folk-music abounds, including the loveliest of all, "Greensleeves."

A chamber-music concert given by the Morley College Music Club was full of interest. There was one curio—Mozart's Adagio and Rondo for flute, oboe, viola, 'cello and glass harmonica, whose rotating glass bowls played with a wet finger were said to send the performer into hysterics. The pieces now were played on a celesta—one would have thought them unplayable on a row of glasses, even without the hysterics—but though interesting they are not good Mozart. There was also the first performance of a clarinet quintet by Leo Wurmser. This was in the romantic vein, tracing descent from Brahms—a work whose warm feeling gave one something pleasant and refreshing to remember. It was quite obvious even at a first hearing that Mr. Wurmser understands thoroughly how to write chamber music, that he has plenty of ideas—and very good ones—and that this eloquent romantic style is natural to him. The quintet rings true (the scherzo is very brilliant) and I hope we shall hear it again. Equally romantic in feeling, though very different in style, is Benjamin Britten's Serenade for tenor voice, horn and strings, which was given at Friends' House by Peter Pears, Dennis Brain and the Walter Goehr orchestra. This is a setting of six contrasted poems and the music is a regular blaze of Turner-esque colour. The high-light is the setting of Tennyson's "The splendour falls on castle walls," with breathlessly exciting rhythm, and the horns of Elfland blow and the purple glens reply in an entrancing fashion. In contrast there is a weird



"Four walls and a roof? Then it's only a C3 billet, at 2d. a night."

creepy setting of the fifteenth-century "Lyke-Wake Dirge"—this is a fascinating work.

We do not often hear Bruckner's Romantic Symphony which has recently been given by Dr. Heinz Unger and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and though its length may not be altogether heavenly it does not deserve such total neglect. We hear Beethoven's Seventh Symphony far too often, but seldom such a fine and powerful performance of it as Mr. JOHN Barbirolli's at the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert; and the delicacy of Mr. Barbirolli's reading of Ravel's "Mother Goose" suite was a delight. But one wishes he would not bedizen the naïf fragility of the Elizabethan music of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. We don't want to hear "Giles Farnaby's Dreame"

played by a solo viola or John Bull's "The King's Hunt" with four horns and ponticello "effects" by the strings. The Albert Hall echo added "effects" of its own as if the king's horses were galloping round the roof. I would have galloped away on one of them had I been able to catch it. D. C. B.

Winter in Ireland

PRIMROSES are blooming here
In midwinter, and near by
Snowdrops in their grace appear
Under January's sky.

At a time when fields should freeze
A periwinkle shows her face.
And Peace is with us too, like these,
Beautiful and out of place. ANON.



"... and life in the A.T.C. can be much easier if you can play the piano."

Our Booking-Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Amateur Sailor

THE second and longer part of *Amateur Sailor* (CONSTABLE, 9/-) deals with Mr. NICHOLAS DREW's experiences as a rating in Norway and at Dunkirk, and as an R.N.V.R. officer in the Battle of the Atlantic. Dunkirk is vividly described—the silent English soldiers who "waded out through the surf and stood looking at us like a pack of pathetic, half-drowned schoolboys," and the far from silent French soldiers who clambered into the boat in such numbers as to drive it deep down into the sand from which it was freed only with the greatest difficulty. But on the whole this part of the book is not much above the ordinary level of war narrative. The style is conventional ("We gave the Junkers full marks for the way they held formation") and the author's lengthy and detailed impressions of the men with whom he sailed lacking in life. He has not had time enough to see them in perspective, and no doubt was further hampered by a natural unwillingness to achieve complete verisimilitude at the expense of those with whom he has shared so much discomfort and danger. But in the picture of his early years, with an uncle and aunt in a south-coast town, Mr. DREW shows that the war has handicapped not helped him as a writer. His uncle, a well-to-do dairyman, used to take him on a business round in his pony and trap, and it was on these drives that he first felt the attraction of the sea, visible "at the foot of each street we passed on our way out of the town." On the pebbly beach, to which he was drawn by the pleasure-craft and fishing-boats lying there, he made friends with a young man who took him for trips in his sailing-boat. Meanwhile his uncle was beginning to drink heavily. The large milk combines were proving too much

for him, and the most moving chapter in the book describes his collapse and death, and the discovery by his wife, the author's Aunt Ruth, that he had been solacing himself with women as well as drink. One cannot compare Mr. DREW in his first book with H. G. Wells at the height of his powers, yet, even if at a considerable remove, Aunt Ruth in her kindness and common sense, and fortitude in disaster and disillusionment, recalls George Ponderevo's aunt in *Tono-Bungay*.

H. K.

Dead Woman's Shoes

The crazy English inheritance laws, which rely on testators being just or sentimental enough to do what is right by their relations, provide Miss I. COMPTON-BURNETT with material for an embittered and ruthless comedy of manners. Coming new to the author's highly idiosyncratic method of handling a novel, one finds the going hard at first; for the story is related almost entirely in dialogue and very undifferentiated dialogue at that, the author's voice proceeding like a ventriloquist's from an assemblage of male and female puppets, constituting two related families and their retainers. What plot there is centres round *Aunt Sukey*, who is dying in a leisurely manner under the roof of her sister and brother-in-law, surrounded by the perfunctory attentions of her expectant legatees. All concerned would obviously have benefited had *Jessica* and *Thomas* received a suitable salary for their ministrations. As it is, Christian charity, minus its traditional inspiration, fails to stay the course—with a bizarre result which it would be manifestly unfair to divulge. A pair of children with a fancy religion of their own provide a grotesque but apposite parody of the devotion lacking in their *Elders and Bettors* (GOLLANCZ, 9/6).

H. P. E.

B.B.C. Observer

Among Mr. RICHARD DIMBLEBY's achievements are to be reckoned an almost unpleasantly close approach to the Battle of Keren, a yachting cruise in the Sea of Marmora, a bout of diphtheria at Khartoum, and a quick shave at a leaky locomotive boiler near Salonika. The story of his adventures—*The Frontiers Are Green* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 12/6)—is curiously uneven, many of his pages being filled with details such as are incidental to rough travel even in peace-time, but occasional passages coming out with a regular clash of arms. In particular the condensed narrative of the swirling second withdrawal across the Libyan desert is furious in its intensity. Though he shared most of the risks of combat the writer was of course technically a non-combatant, and his most desperate personal struggle was against a lorry he had to drive through impossible country with second and third gears stripped. There were also not a few occasions when he would have been badly left behind by Nazi agents in neutral countries if he had not come out top in a battle of wits. His book is not improved by the inclusion of long quotations from his dispatches. Excellent in themselves, these passages will trouble most people by the mere presence of inverted commas.

C. C. P.

A Boer Looks Back.

What with the compulsory extension of schooldays and the rusty-at-forty attitude of the machine-age towards its human cog-wheels, there does not seem much scope left for manhood and womanhood. Yet presumably there are some boys and girls who still hope to find the world their oyster, and some old people nostalgically to remind them that such a world once existed. To these one

unreservedly commends Mr. VICTOR POHL's *Adventures of a Boer Family* (FABER, 7/6), the epic history of an elderly couple with eight children living on the Basutoland frontier. When the Boer War breaks out three sons leave on commando. VICTOR, the author, heads the under-fourteens remaining; and though names like Spion Kop and Magersfontein reverberate in his brothers' journals, it is the children's front that counts. Its greatest moments are VICTOR's own capture by the British while delivering his sister Sophia's love-letters; Sophia's own defence of the homestead against the Basutos; and Dudley's sojourn (with his bushman follower Plaatjie and their dog Maahnaar) as the petted prisoners of some Tommies—an interval which that twelve-year-old patriot improves by making a careful plan of their camp for De Wet. What a life! And with what grace, good-temper and vision are its humours and tragedies recounted!

H. P. E.

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe's War Diary

Britain's War-Time Revolution (GOLLANCZ, 8/6) is a day by day diary from September 1939 to December 1942, kept by Mr. HAMILTON FYFE, a former editor of the *Daily Herald*, the circulation of which he more than trebled between 1922 and 1926. In his preface Mr. FYFE says that the uneasiness once caused by the word "revolution" exists no longer. It used to suggest street fighting and mass executions, but the Archbishop of Canterbury, *The Times* and the *Spectator* are all agreed that we are passing through a revolution nowadays, and clearly it is not a violent one. After this reassuring explanation the reader may proceed with an untroubled mind to enjoy an unusually lively war diary, enriched by criticisms of our politicians and generals which are frank enough, even though they might not seem very ferocious in countries where the word "revolution" still causes some uneasiness. The most interesting entries, however, are those which recreate the varying moods and opinions of the country three and four years ago. On May 14th 1940 Mr. FYFE reports the complaint of a soldier wounded in France that the Germans "act like gangsters"—using automatic pistols which spray their bullets suddenly with fatal accuracy like the partisans of Al Capone in Chicago. On June 2nd, just after the retreat from Dunkirk, the L.D.V. proposed to break up an open space in a certain town so as to make it useless for planes to land upon; but the local authorities said the ground was booked for a Sunday school treat a fortnight ahead, and nothing could be done till that was over. On July 3rd 1941 Mr. FYFE refers to the refusal of the Foreign Office to let the "Internationale" be played with the national anthems of our other Allies; and a fortnight later he writes—"The wrigglings of the B.B.C. to escape playing the 'Internationale' together with other national anthems have ended farcically in the decision not to play any of them. This is a relief, certainly." Mr. FYFE ends on a note of hope about the progress the revolution is making, but it remains to be seen whether the post-war world will invalidate the best entry in the book—"A little girl in a North of England school was asked if she knew the meaning of Armistice Day. She said it had first occurred on November 11th 1918, and since then there had been two minutes peace each year."

H. K.

A Baltic Island

Baltic Paradise (FREDERICK MULLER, 10/6) is a pleasant little book about the Danish island of Bornholm which Mr. HENRY BAERLEIN visited a year or two before the war. It has beauties of every kind, particularly including the

700-year-old round churches, but as a Danish poet standing on the citadel of Christianso said, "When you see from there how the horizon is round, the island is round, the citadel round, and that you are round, you almost feel as if you were the axle round which everything revolves." The author relieves the text with snatches of good light verse and anecdotes such as the following: "So I told them of an ancient family in France, that of the Dukes of Levis-Mirepoix. One of their predecessors had a piece of mediaeval tapestry whereon he was depicted with the Blessed Virgin and the Child. Some words, embroidered neatly, issue from the Virgin's lips as she is turning to the Duke. 'I beg you,' she is saying, 'to keep on your hat, my cousin.'" The photographs are very good; but it is a pity that there is not at least one coloured illustration—as, for instance, of the houses in Ronne: "All of them, one-storied structures, were a brilliant blue or pink or primrose colour with great beams of dark-stained wood diagonally fixed and charming little leaded windows."

E. S. P. H.

Cold Without Comfort

Nowadays the titles of books are often irrelevant, but Mr. CRICHTON PORTEOUS does not stray from his subject in *The Snow* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 8/6), which is the chilliest story imaginable and also as gripping as the grasp of winter. It is the description of a few days in the life of a northern farmer, his wife, two labourers, a child evacuee, and a few neighbours when the farm is snowbound and sheep and cars are buried. There is no "plot" in the usual sense of the word; and the author has been wise to keep to essentials, for there is no time for dallying or any feelings but cold, pain, frustration and acceptance. Bill, a labourer, is as stubborn, the child as tiresome and the wife as anxious as these people would be in such circumstances. There is relief in the form of some really lovely descriptions of the first gleam of sunlight on snow, and of trees and an aeroplane caught in the beam of a search-light. Possibly, just now, the book may make greater appeal to desert-exiles than to those who are waiting for spring, but it has fascination and ends on the same note of endurance with which it began—"Wars come and go, but there were snows and farming before that, and there'll be snows and farming after this war."

B. E. B.



"Mr. Goddard is fighting in the Burmese jungle—perhaps you would prefer to see Mr. Wright."



Preparatory Schools

ONE of the more quotable songs in Mr. Ronald Frankau's repertoire had a chorus which began: "The Preparatory School, the Public School, and the 'Varsity Produce the kind of fellah of which there's a scar-city."

Now of all forms of education the first-named has received least attention from Mr. Butler's Bill.

The answer to this statement, no doubt, is that, whatever may be the truth about preparatory schools, numerically they are insignificant. But does this argument seem logical

to anyone but the most uncompromising mathematician?

Consider that these establishments ("exclusive breeding-grounds of snobbery," according to my friends of the Left) are the main source of supply for the public schools, and have largely officered the Royal Navy for the past half-century—and then consider for a moment their potentialities.

To illustrate my meaning, try teaching thirty or forty children for forty-five minutes at a time, giving all of them strict individual attention—and then repeat the experiment with ten or a dozen.

You see? What power, for good or ill, is wielded by the man or woman who controls the smaller number! It is terrific—almost totalitarian—and yet these small but significant units of the school world go on their way almost unregarded.

They are privately-owned, you say. Well, so are wireless-sets, but who can escape the consequences of their existence?

As we know to our infinite sorrow, anyone, with or without discrimination, may possess a wireless-set, and similarly anyone who likes may start a preparatory school—and choose the programme into the bargain. It is true that Mr. Butler's Bill provides for his registration and inspection by the Board of Education. But inspection is like Christmas. It comes but once a year—and everybody knows when it is coming.

That is where our glorious individualism steps in.

When standardization knocks at the door, say the apostles of privacy, originality flies out of the window.

There would indeed have been little chance for some of the headmasters I have known of if school inspectors had been liable to bob up *unannounced* in the middle of one of their manifestations of independence. Think of the one who retired to bed to rewrite the Psalms, having previously engaged a well-educated and comely domestic staff, in order that they might hear his version of them while they dusted the room. What would be the reaction of an inspector to the reverend gentleman who broke off in the middle of a discourse to consult his deceased mother, achieving communication through the medium of a cushion stuffed with her letters?

She was a business woman anyway, because after one spiritual consultation during negotiations with a friend of mine, he sold him the school. It was only later that my friend found he had paid for a lot of the boys' private property.

Well, experience, like educational liberty, is bound to cost something.

There is a carefree spirit, when one thinks of it, about people who can knock a hole in the roof and build a platform for moonlight cocktail-parties. And what critic can accuse a school of repression when the headmaster's wife invites boys to smoke cigarettes in the drawing-room at midnight and throws custard at an assistant master during dinner?

Preparatory schools would be nothing without the whims of their chiefs, who may at any moment desert the school dinner-table to sit down to better fare

in the kitchen, make a tidy profit by selling used typing-carbon in the school shop, and then spend it all in one alcoholic party during which their charges are left masterless.

In the realm of sport too there is scope for individual genius.

The headmaster who acquired a long-jump record for his son by means of a resilient device at the take-off, another who found he could double the goal-output of his football team by beating all five forwards before a match, and yet another who regularly marshalled his cricket eleven for devotions in the chapel before action—all these are examples of the eccentric brilliance so lightly passed over by Mr. Butler. They met their match too in one school conducted by a formidable woman who directed her footballers from a chair on the touch-line: "Now then! Are you feeling frightened by any chance, Jones? Then why not tackle him? That's better! Well—where is that left-half? Where is HE?" . . .

It is true that I am taking some care to quote from the characteristics of establishments which are no longer enlivening our culture. But it is certain that these remarkable seats of learning have their successors to-day, no less independent and whimsical for being conducted in places remote from the cold eye of inspection or even the gullible glances of parents.

Indeed I have positive information that it is so. Somewhere in the unbombed wilds little boys are leading an untrammelled existence—milking goats instead of swotting French verbs, and engaging in combat with clasp-knives more freely than their fathers do in the battle-school.

I feel that such enterprise should have received more attention, in one way or another, at this stage of our educational history.

A little sympathetic interest would go a long way towards showing these guardians of youth that their activities are known and appreciated. Let us hope that the Fleming Committee will attend to the matter.

Hitherto they have been honoured only by a few novelists who specialize in the scandalous and whose readers consequently lay down their books with the entirely unjust comment: "Well, of course, it's funny—outrageously funny, I admit—but nothing like that could ever happen in real life."

(*The scene is the kitchen-lounge-study-dining-room of a country house not far from Meudley. The Faircloughs are at breakfast. Above the table a paraffin lamp drones ominously. There is a sound of knocking at the door. The family eats in silence. The knocking is repeated.*)

Mr. Fairclough. We must get used to the idea that Sheila is no longer with us. Patricia, see who it is at the door.

Patricia. Yes, Daddy. (*She takes an extra large mouthful of a lend-lease meat preparation and hurries to the door, returning with two letters.* One for you, Daddy, and one for you, William.

(*Mr. Fairclough opens his letter and reads—first silently and then, with gathered brows, aloud.*)

Mr. Fairclough. "From the Regional Controller, Ministry of Fuel and Power.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter dated January 1st 1943 (but received at this office more than a year later), I would inform you that in view of the present supply position and the need for providing against future coal requirements for Military Operations, it has been necessary to reduce supplies of House Coal for current consumption. In these circumstances I regret to inform you that I do not feel justified in causing a licence to be issued

enabling you to acquire more than the 5 cwt. of coal permitted by the Restriction of Supplies Order for the current month.

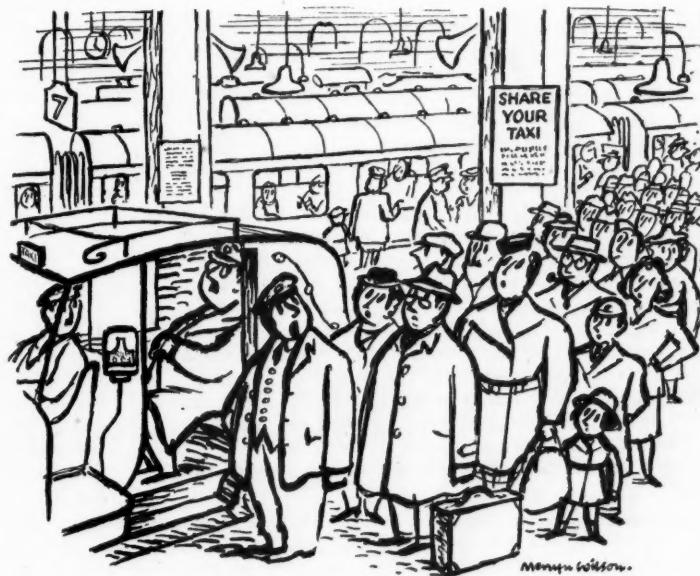
The fact that your well-water has been condemned and is useless for all domestic purposes until it is boiled is singularly unfortunate at a time like this. I appreciate too your difficulty with regard to the two thin-blooded bed-ridden aunts you speak of. Relying as you do (and of course as many country-dwellers do) entirely on coal and paraffin your position is certainly an unenviable one. If your reasonable requirements cannot be met from the restricted quantity available I would suggest that you explore the possibility of making good the deficiency by means of Coke or Manufactured Fuel."

Mrs. Fairclough (bravely). Never mind, dear. You've done your best. Now, William, what's your letter about?

William. It's from the Ministry of Labour. They've had another ballot and . . .

The Contortionists

" . . . We wish to state clearly that we have no need to plagiarize, our staff being sufficiently competent to stand upon its own bottom."—*Trade paper.*



"A partisan is a very hard kind of cheese."
Schoolgirl's answer.

German generals agree.

"Anyone else for the War Office?"

The Courts—Week by Week

Crime Marches On.

EUSTACE looked a forlorn and dejected specimen of humanity. His beard, a trifle moth-eaten, was as red as that of a Mahomedan but recently returned from Mecca. His eyes were bloodshot and peered resentfully through a pair of mother-o'-pearl opera-glasses. He wore his pink plus fours and his orange sombrero with the air of a man to whom Savile Row was the daily pilgrimage.

He stood in the dock at Low Street and gave Mr. McSenna back stare for stare. Injured innocence was written in every line of his wrinkled face and his Adam's apple wobbled in indignant protest.

Mr. McSenna pushed his spectacles behind his left ear, parked his chewing-gum on the Bench and sighed audibly.

"The charge," he said, "is loitering with intent to commit a felony. Have you anything to say?"

His cultured tone and verbiage betrayed Eustace's proud origin.

"I never done it, sir. I never done it."

Mr. McSenna looked dubious.

"The constable says you did," he declared mildly. "He says he found you outside a block of flats with the upper part of your face masked and a loaded revolver in each hand. One of you is telling stories."

"That's quite right, sir, I was there. Me and my mates was playing cowboys an' injuns."

Mr. McSenna smiled indulgently.

"I see," he said genially. "Boys will be boys. The constable made a mistake. Now off you go and finish your game."

* * * * *

Mr. McSenna recovered his chewing gum and the court relaxed while he refreshed himself. Dispensing justice is a dry business.

"Call the next case," he said at last, and Gladys hoisted her sixteen stone into the dock, permeating the musty atmosphere, it seemed, with the smell of wild thyme. Gladys had been found wandering without visible means of support.

Mr. McSenna stroked his jaw reflectively and playfully punched the clerk of the court who stroked his.

"You have heard the charge," he said to Gladys. "What have you to say? Do you deny that you were without visible means of support?"

"You bet I do, buddy," she replied, and as the soft lilt of her voice fell musically on their ears, hardened constables and thrice-hardened inspectors vowed silently to linger that evening in Berkeley Square.

Seemingly unconscious of the chords she had struck, Gladys continued. "I'll say I deny it. Take a look at this footwear. If a guy can't see no support there, then I guess there's some p'n wrong with his eyesight. Yes, sir!"

"I'm afraid you have misunderstood," said Mr. McSenna. "When the constable stopped you, you had no money in your possession, nor have you a fixed abode."

The light of understanding dawned in the eyes of the accused.

"I get it," she said. "So what?"

Mr. McSenna abandoned the uneven contest and turned to the court missionary.

"Have you made any inquiries about her?" he asked.

"She appears to have been directed into a London factory from somewhere in the country to make room for a Land Army trainee, sir. I gather that, apart from a passion for George Raft, she's harmless enough. She has expressed a wish to study art at the Polytechnic."

Mr. McSenna nodded, then turned to Gladys.

"You hear what the missionary says: I'm going to give you a chance. You will be kept in custody till one o'clock to-day, after which you may go."

"O.K., baby, suits me," said Gladys brightly, and waved a cheery good-bye as she waddled to the cells in the wake of a kindly gaoler.

* * * * *

Richard was a youth of indeterminate age and irreproachable manners. Mr. McSenna regarded him searchingly.

"You are accused," he said, "of causing an obstruction. According to the evidence you carried a grand piano into the middle of the road, hung a card on it bearing the inscription, 'Ex-Service Man,' and proceeded to sell tips for last year's Derby. Have you anything to say in extenuation of your conduct?"

The youth flung back a recalcitrant lock of hair which hit the gaoler behind him in the eye.

"The tip was a good one, sir," he said ingratiatingly.

Mr. McSenna appeared to reflect.

"You don't look old enough to have been in the services," he said at last. "How old are you?"

"Fourteen, sir. I am of course too young for this war. It was the Boer War I served in."

Mr. McSenna somehow still didn't seem satisfied. "Has he a record, Inspector?"

"Nothing much, sir. Arson, forgery, burglary, embezzlement and two cases of attempted murder."

Mr. McSenna shook his head as if loth by his harshness to precipitate a life of crime, then delivered judgment.

"You're dismissed this time under the 'Probation of Offenders Act.'"

Richard bowed his thanks with the grace of a prima donna taking a curtain, but Mr. McSenna scarcely seemed aware of it. He was unwrapping a fresh piece of chewing-gum.

○ ○

Invocation

LEST you should spin like Icarus to earth
Let not the sun too fiercely on you fall,
The wayfaring stars eclipse your little light
Nor your shape span with wings the winter moon;
Tempests be tempered to you, and your path
Drive through the edge of danger like a flail.
And while the clouds cover you from my sight
Let my love lie on you like thistledown.

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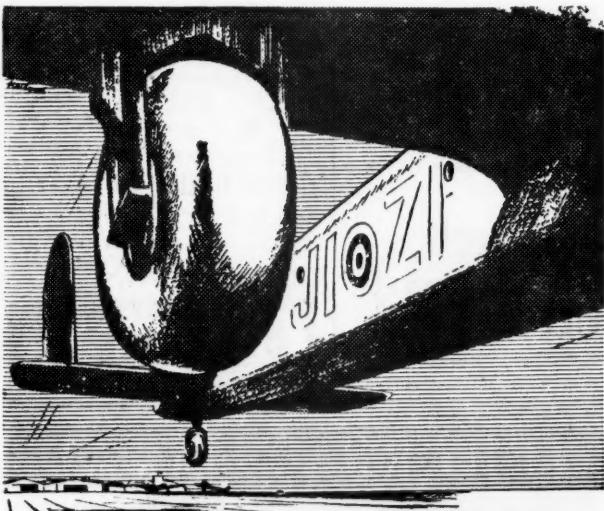
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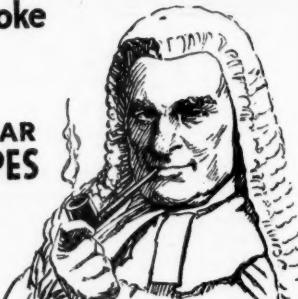


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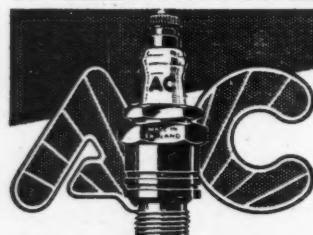
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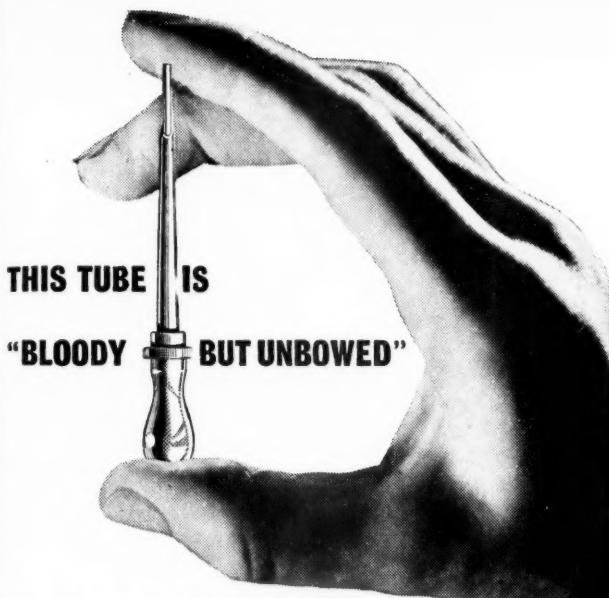
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